



CABINET – 23 JUNE 2023 - REVIEW OF HOMELESS SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMENTS ON BEHALF OF FALCON SUPPORT SERVICES

Introduction
We are submitting these comments and further context in relation to the Cabinet Paper “Review of Homeless Support Services” that is being presented to Cabinet on Friday 23 rd June.
Comments
<p>The current funding model for homeless support services does not pay for the running of homeless hostel buildings, such as the Falcon Centre. However, for the Falcon Centre to be classed as exempt accommodation and therefore eligible for the Housing Benefit it must have 5-7 hours per week, per person or care, support, and supervision.</p> <p>As such if this funding is fully withdrawn, the Falcon Centre would close and remove 30 bed homeless hostel building*, and this will directly impact the number of people rough sleeping in Leicestershire, going directly against the Governments Manifesto 2019 and the Ending Rough Sleeping for Good 2022, but also will negatively impact the Health and Wellbeing of the population in Leicestershire.</p> <p>“If the support stops it would mean that the Falcon Centre would no longer be classed as exempt accommodation and all Housing Benefit would have to stop.” Capita Team Leader</p>
Need
<p>We understand that Leicestershire County Council does not have a statutory responsibility for homelessness, but we still feel there is a substantial need and benefit for Leicestershire County Council to keep commissioning a homeless provision. The investment in homelessness services generates a saving to other areas of public spending such as health, social care, and the criminal justice system.</p> <p>We house and support 100 people a year at the Falcon Centre. We had 269 referrals for the Falcon Centre 2022-23, (an increase of 42% in the last 5 years). In addition, we had 486 individuals, (8,072 visits) last year, supported through the Community Drop In held at the Falcon Centre which delivers homeless prevention, early intervention and health services to reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>We are the only accommodation provider in Leicestershire accommodating complex needs, dual diagnosis and high-risk individuals. This includes non-priority and priority need that have been found intentionally homeless.</p>
Proposed Model
We agree that First Contact Plus and the Local Area Co-ordinator service are good existing services which deliver low level generic support, where eligibility is wider, although it lacks the knowledge and expertise required for homelessness. With evidence showing that the homeless population are the most marginalised group, we know they struggle to engage in generic service offers as well as lack digital competency, literacy skills, access to computer, phone, and internet we therefore have concerns that this would meet the needs of this population.
Moving Forward
As part of the review of homeless support services we would be more than happy to be involved in the consultation process, assist with engaging with district councils, and would welcome you to visit the current provision and open to working together so Leicestershire County Council can make some savings and we can find a way forward that doesn’t remove the vital safety net for vulnerable homeless individuals.

*In 2015 Leicestershire County Council cut funding from Kennedy House, the South Leicestershire hostel building which subsequently closed; demonstrating the impact of the support contract cuts on providing homeless hostel buildings.

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